

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-30

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R 091700Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9270

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 7690/1

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: MASS, EAID, CG

SUBJ: SALE OF M-16'S TO ZAIRE AND MILITARY COOPERATION IN GENERAL

REF: STATE 196820

1. SUMMARY: IN PRESENCE FONMIN UMBA, I INFORMED PRES MOBUTU SEP 9 US PREPARED SELL M-16'S. MOBUTU GRATIFIED AND SAID ZAIRE ALSO HAD URGENT NEED FOR C-130'S, ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM, AND TANKS. HE SAID HE WOULD INSTRUCT GEN MOLONGYA TO MEET WITH US REPS HERE SEP 12 OR 13 TO DISCUSS NEEDED MILITARY EQUIPMENT. MOBUTU SAID HE HOPED US COULD AGREE TO SUPPLY ANTI-AIRCRAFT SYSTEM BEFORE HIS DECEMBER VISIT TO MOSCOW. END SUMMARY.
2. PRES MOBUTU RECEIVED ME THIS MORNING (SEP 9) WITHIN HOURS OF MY REQUEST. HE HAD ME CALL AT FOREIGN MINISTRY FIRST AND I PROCEEDED TO HIS OFFICE IN COMPANY OF FONMIN UMBA.
3. I INFORMED PRES OF DECISION TO SELL M-16'S TO ZAIRE. I PUT MATTER IN CONTEXT OF CHANGE IN OVER-ALL POLICY WHICH SINCE EARLY 1960'S HAD PRECLUDED SUCH SALES AND EXPLAINED TO HIM IT NOW ALWAYS EASY PROMPTLY TO CHANGE ESTABLISHED NSC AND PRESIDENTIAL POLICIES. AMB VANCE AND I AND MANY OTHERS HAD BEEN WORKING ON MATTER. I DID NOT MENTION MOROCCO. HE SAID THIS WAS GOOD NEWS INDEED. ZAIRE'S ARMY HAD TOO LONG BEEN DEPENDENT ON BELGIUM AS SOURCE FOR SMALL ARMS AND HE HAD WANTED TO DIVERSIFY TO US AND ACQUIRE M-16'S.

4. POCKETING THE M-16'S MOBUTU IMMEDIATELY LAUNCHED INTO DISCUSSION

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OF HIS INTEREST IN OTHER ARMS. STARTING WITH C-130'S AND MENTIONING

TANKS, ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS. I ASKED, WHEN I HAD A CHANCE, WHAT PROBLEM WAS WITH C-130'S. HE SAID IT WAS SPARE PARTS. I SAID I HAD REVIEWED THAT SUBJECT WITH ZAMISH LAST WEEK AND WAS ASSURED THAT PROBLEMS WERE UNDER CONTROL, INCLUDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SUPPLY OF REPLACEMENT ENGINES. I TOLD HIM THERE WERE LARGE NUMBER OF SUBPROJECTS FOR SUPPORT OF C-130'S AND ONLY PROBLEMS I KNEW OF WERE MINOR ONES OF ADMINISTRATIVE NATURE. WITH RESPECT TO LIGHT TANKS, I SAID MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT WE WERE PREPARED AND HAD SO INDICATED TO GOZ TO MAKE AVAILABLE CADILLAC ARMORED CARS BUT THAT INTEREST SEEMED TO HAVE WANED IN MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. I TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO SAY THERE WERE AT TIMES MISUNDERSTANDINGS BECAUSE OF A LACK OF CLARITY IN EXACTLY WHAT WAS WANTED AND THAT WITHOUT KNOWING SPECIFIC ITEMS HE SOUGHT, I COULD NOT GIVE HIM AN ANSWER AS TO WHETHER OR NOT WE COULD SELL. I THOUGHT THAT MORE SYSTEMATIC DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN ZAMISH AND AUTHORIZED GOZ SPOKESMAN COULD LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING RE WHAT WAS POSSIBLE, WHAT NEEDED STUDY, AND WHAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE IN FAIRLY SHORT ORDER. HE AGREED. HE SAID HE ENVISAGED A MILITARY MISSION TO WASHINGTON AND PERHAPS THAT WOULD BE DESIREABLE, BUT HE WOULD GIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR GEN MOLONGYA TO MEET WITH OUT MILITARY MISSION HERE THIS THURSDAY OR FRIDAY. AT THAT TIME MOLONGYA, WHO PRESENTLY TIED UP AT MPR SEMINAR, COULD DISCUSS DETAILS OF M-16 SALE AS WELL AS OTHER PENDING MATTERS. I WELCOMED PROPOSAL. (BECAUSE OF PRESIDENTIAL INTEREST, I PLAN TO HAVE DCM PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS. WE ARE ADVISING COL. GERACI, PRESENTLY AT EUCOM, THAT HIS EARLY RETURN WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIREABLE.)

5. PRES THEN SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT DIFFICULTIES OF DOING BUSINESS WITH US. HE SAID THERE WAS A PENTAGON POLICY, A STATE DEPT POLICY, A WHITE HOUSE POLICY, ETC. HE GAVE AS EXAMPLE WHAT HE SAID HAD BEEN VETOED BY DEFENSE AND STATE ON HIS DESIRE TO BUY C-130'S AND SAID HE HAD WORKED THAT OUT PERSONALLY WITH PRES NIXON. I COMMENTED THAT I IMAGINED THAT THERE WERE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN UMBA AND SOME OF HIS COLLEAGUES FROM TIME TO TIME WHICH HAD TO BE RESOLVED AT PRESIDENTIAL LEVEL. WHILE IT WAS TRUE THERE WERE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW IN WASHINGTON, IT WAS NOT TRUE AS HE HAD ALLEGED THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF AMERICAN GOVTS. THERE WAS ONLY ONE AMERICAN GOVT AND THE PRESIDENT COULD AND DID RESOLVE DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THAT GOVT. AS THE PRESIDENT'S REPRESENTATIVE IN ZAIRE, I REPRESENTED AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE

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AND WOULD ENDEAVOR FAITHFULLY TO CONVEY MOBUTU'S VIEWPOINT THROUGH STATE DEPT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER TO OUR PRESIDENT AND MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES TO HIM. IT COULD TAKE TIME, HOWEVER, TO WORK COMPLICATED MATTERS OUT.

6. I ASKED IF I COULD SPEAK VERY FRANKLY. HE SAID, OF COURSE, AND I EXPLAINED THAT FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES IN DEALING WITH GOVT OF ZAIRE. WE HEARD ONE THING FROM GENERAL

BABIA, SOMETIMES SOMETHING ELSE FROM GENERAL MOLONGYA. MOREOVER,
HIS MILITARY ATTACHE IN WASHINGTON,(&
'7(FALLU, WAS VERY ACTIVE
IN APPROACHING PENTAGON AND AMERICAN CORPORATIONS. WE WERE
SELDOM CERTAIN OF EXACTLY WHAT WERE GOZ PRIORITIES. CURRENT EXAMPLE
WAS SITUATION WHERE AMERICAN COMPANIES HAD THOUGHT ZAIRE INTERESTED
IN HELICOPTERS BUT I NOTED THAT PRES MOBUTU HAD NOT MENTIONED
HELICOPTERS. I THOUGHT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO GET AN ORDERLY DISCUSSION

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KINSHASA 7690/2

EXDIS

GOING OF PRIORITIES. HE REPLIED THAT HE, THE PRESIDENT, WOULD TELL
ME WHAT ZAIRE'S PRIORITIES WERE AND THAT "ZAMISH COULD THROW OUT
ITS NOTEBOOKS" AND WORK ON HIS PRIORITIES WITH GENERAL MOLONGYA. AS
FOR HELICOPTERS, HE HAD THAT MORNING DECIDED TO DEFER ACQUISITION
AND GENERAL BABIA HAD BEEN INSTRUCTION TO PASS WORD TO US
COMPANIES. (BOEING AND SIKORSKY REPS HAVE BEEN IN TOWN SINCE BEFORE
MY ARRIVAL.) HE SAID HE WAS DEFERRING NOT CANCELLING. REASON WAS
THAT SUCH ITEMS WERE EXPENSIVE AND HE HAD OTHER PRIORITIES.
I SAID YES, ARMS ARE EXPENSIVE, WHICH WAS ANOTHER REASON FOR
CAREFUL CONSIDERATION.

7. AT ABOUT THIS POINT HE TURNED TO UMBA AND A CONVERSATION IN
LINGALA ENSUED DURING WHICH I HEARD MENTIONED POLAND, HUNGARY
AND BULGARIA. WHEN HE TURNED BACK TO ME, HE SAID HE WANTED TO EX-
PLAIN SOMETHING THAT WAS VERY IMPORTANT. HE WANTED ME TO KNOW THAT
HE WAS GOING TO MOSCOW ON DEC 9. HIS PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE ARRANGE-
MENTS FOR ACQUISITION OF A MODERN AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. HE WAS SER-
IOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEED TO PROTECT INGA AND THE COPPER
MINES OF SHABA. I WOULD RECALL HAVING SEEN PICTURES, HE SAID,
ON RUSSIAN MILITARY MISSION TO ZAIRE, WHO HAD MET WITH HIM IN THIS

SAME OFFICE. HEAD OF THAT MISSION WAS SAME SOVIET OFFICER WHO HAD SUPPLIED EGYPT AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN MIDDLE EAST WITH AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS. HE WANTED ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE VALUED HIS LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH US AND HE WOULD MUCH PREFER TO DO BUSINESS WITH US. HIS RESPONSIBILITY, HOWEVER, WAS FOR DEFENSE OF HIS COUNTRY AND HE HAD DECIDED TO ACQUIRE ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSE SYSTEM. HE DID NOT TRUST RUSSIANS AND HE REALLY DID NOT WANT THEM INSTALLED NEAR INGA AND IN SHABA SINCE HE KNEW THEY WOULD BE MORE SECRET

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INTERESTED IN ESPIONAGE AND IN TROUBLE-MAKING THAN IN HELPING HIM. IF WE WERE RESPONSIVE, HE WOULD BE PREPARED IN MOSCOW TO SETTLE FOR ACQUISITION OF SOME COASTAL PATROL BOATS. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE FINE FOR THE RUSSIANS TO SURVEIL FISHING OFF ZAIRE'S COAST. HE WAS EXPLICITLY CLEAR, SAYING, "I HOPE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT BETWEEN US IN THE NEXT BEGIN UNDERLINE TWO END UNDERLINE MONTHS."

8. I ASKED WHY AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS. GRANTED THE IMPORTANCE OF INGA AND THE MINES, WHO DID HE THINK WAS LIKELY TO ATTACK? HE REPLIED ONE HAD TO BE PREPARED FOR WAR. WHILE THERE WAS NO PRESENT DANGER, EXCEPT FROM UGANDA, HIS FRONTIERS WERE LONG AND HE WANTED TO BE IN A POSITION WHERE OTHERS WOULD UNDERSTAND THAT HIS KEY RESOURCES WERE PROTECTED.

9. MOBUTU THEN ELABORATED ON THE THREAT FROM UGANDA. HE SAID THE SOVIETS HAD RECENTLY SUPPLIED 45 HEAVY TANKS TO UGANDA. "GENERAL AMIN IS CRAZY" AND WHO KNEW WHAT AMIN WOULD DO. HE MIGHT ATTACK THE NORTHEAST OF ZAIRE. MOBUTU HAD TO BE READY AND HE HAD NOTHING TO STOP SOVIET TANKS. HE SAID THE SOVIETS SAID THEY WERE IN UGANDA TO OFFSET CHINESE ASSISTANCE IN TANZANIA, BUT HE REPEATED THREE OR FOUR TIMES THAT AMIN WAS CRAZY AND NO ONE COULD BE SURE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.

10. HE THEN TOOK UP QUESTION OF PRIORITIES. HIS PRIORITIES VIS-A-VIS THE US WERE THE FOLLOWING: FIRST, C-130'S. THEY WERE IMPORTANT. HE HAD TO HAVE MORE AND HAD TO MAINTAIN THEM. HE WAS GLAD TO HEAR THAT THE PROBLEM WAS UNDER CONTROL. SECOND, M-16'S. THAT ALSO SEEMED TO BE UNDER CONTROL, SUBJECT TO SETTLEMENT OF DETAILED TERMS. THIRD, ANTI-AIRCRAFT DEFENSE SYSTEM. FOURTH, TANKS TO MEET THE THREAT POSED BY GENERAL AMIN. (EARLIER I HAD HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT ANTI-TANK WEAPONS MIGHT DO BUT AT THIS POINT TANKS WERE SPECIFICALLY ASKED FOR.) HE REPEATED THAT THESE WERE HIS PRIORITIES AND THEY WOULD BE BASIS FOR DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN HIS REPS AND US OFFICIALS.

11. SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE COURSE OF LONG DISCUSSION I WAS ABLE TO MENTION COSTLINESS OF ARMAMENT PROGRAM AND AT ONE POINT I ALSO POINTED OUT DISADVANTAGES IN TERMS OF EFFICIENT MAINTENANCE OF HIS FORCES OF OVER-DIVERSIFICATION OF SUPPLIES. HE

AGREED IN PRINCIPLE BUT HE ALSO REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT "TO
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HAVE PEACE ONE HAD TO PREPARE FOR WAR."

12. WHEN HE BROKE OFF THE CONVERSATION, IN ADDITION TO EXPRESSING
MY APPRECIATION FOR HIS HAVING RECEIVED ME AND HAVING
TALKED SO FRANKLY, I MENTIONED MY PLEASURE WITH THE NEWS THAT
JOINT COMPANIES WERE TO BE FORMED BETWEEN ZAIRE AND REYNOLDS TO
DEVELOP ALUMINUM INDUSTRY. HE SAID, YES, THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS
AS FAR AS AMERICAN PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN ZAIRE WERE CONCERNED
BUT THERE WERE PROBLEMS ABOUT MILITARY COOPERATION AND HE HOPED WE
WOULD BE ABLE TO SORT THEM OUT.

13.HIS PARTING WORDS WERE THAT HE WANTED ME TO MEET WITH THE PRESS
AND TELEVISION REPORTERS OUTSIDE TO EXPLAIN THAT I HAD BROUGHT HIM
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM MY GOVT. THERE BEING NO WAY TO AVOID
MEETING, I HELD IT, AND DID AS HE ASKED. ALSO, IN RESPONSE TO
A QUESTION I PREDICTED THAT A BLACK AMERICAN WOULD WIN "THE
FIGHT OF THE CENTURY."
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